Local History

Tragedy at Back Creek

Submitted by Frank Green

The spring of 1941 was extremely hot with temperatures averaging 96 degrees for most of the month. The heatwave was to continue for most of the spring with an occasional break for thunderstorms.

War clouds were also forming over the horizon. The Peninsula was beginning to prepare for a war that almost everybody knew was coming.

Young pilots were training at Langley Field and wanting to show off their skills. Sometimes they were a bit zealous in this.

It was also a time when local watermen would conduct their trade along the Chesapeake Bay and its rivers and estuaries. On May 22, 1941, one of the pilots and one of the watermen would tragically meet. Robert Linwood Saunders was clamming near the mouth of Back Creek. He was the son of Robert Saunders and Martha Virginia Carmines and lived on Hunt's Neck in Poquoson. He was aboard a 33-foot " cabin canoe".

There were also other Poquoson fisherman in the area at the time. They were: E.T. Freeman, Bill Huggett, Jimmy Dryden, Jack Dryden and Wilton Insley. They were mending their nets and were in two separate boats tied up to a duck blind.

At 3:30 p.m. 2nd Lt. William H. Howard and 2nd Paul Lindsey took off in a PT-17 Stearman Biplane. The Stearman was a common trainer at the time and was used by the Air Corps and Navy. Howard was giving Lindsay a "check out" for the Stearman. Lindsay originally had the controls and Howard took over after about ten minutes, with Lindsey in the front cockpit and Howard in the back. After about fifteen minutes of flying over land, they noticed three boats in the bay near the mouth of Back Creek. They proceeded to fly towards the boats.

They made the first of three buzzes over the boats, barely missing the masts by about ten inches. The plane turned around and made another pass over the boats. This time they came even closer. The left wing just missing Jimmy Dryden's head. Freeman took a dip-net and made a motion as if shooting at the plane. The others grabbed life vests and lay flat in their boats, ready to jump overboard should the need arise.

Howard brought the plane around for a third pass. Saunders was up on his boat's washboard tonging clams. As they flew the plane down, its right wheel hit about thirty feet astern of Saunders' boat. This brought the right wing into the water. The plane made a right angle into the boat, killing Saunders instantly before crashing. The pilots were picked up later by the fishermen and were taken to Langley Field hospital with minor injuries.

Saunders' body was not immediately found. Later that day, a shoe was discovered with one of his legs in it and his body was found the next day.

Dr. L.O. Powell, the Coroner for York County, viewed the body at an inlet of Bennett's Creek. Several people who knew Saunders identified his body. Both of his legs were missing and one of his eyes and one ear were also missing. On the death certificate, Dr Powell wrote the following: "Accidental death from an airplane being driven carelessly and by a dangerous pilot. Shock and hemorrhage."

Robert Linwood Saunders was taken to Claytor-Rollins Funeral Home and was buried at the family cemetery on Brown's Neck Road. His grave is still visible in the cemetery in front of 66 Brown's Neck Road.

Howard and Lindsey were arrested and held for court-martial after being released from the hospital. It was later decided not to court martial Lindsey.

Howard was court-martialed on November 6, 1941.The watermen, Dr.Powell and funeral director C.S. Rollins were called to testify for the prosecution. He was found guilty of manslaughter and negligence. He was sentenced to dismissal from the service, forfeiture of all due pay and any future due pay and two years in prison performing hard labor.

Local Man Rides for a Cause

By Nancy E. Sheppard
Yorktown Crier -
Poquoson Post

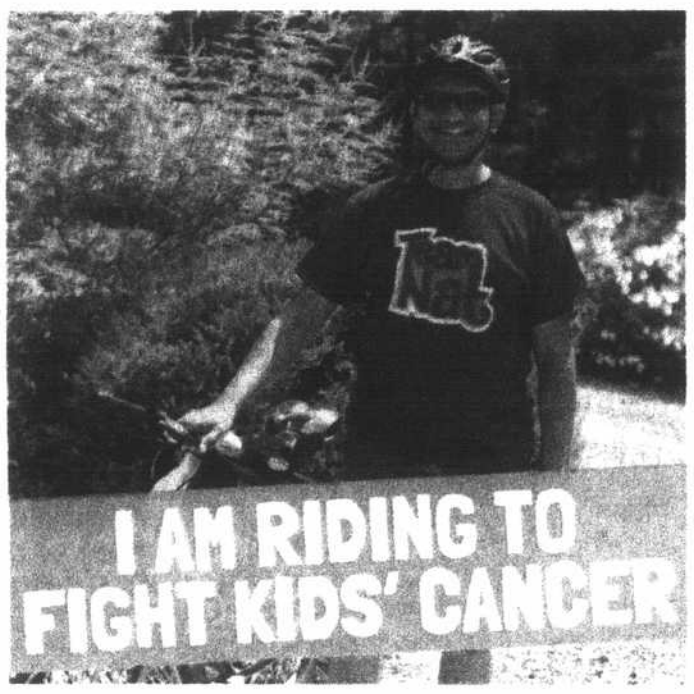
YORKTOWN – Ruben Fair is riding with a mission: To raise money for the Children's Cancer Research Fund with the Great Cycle Challenge.

The Great Cycle Challenge is held during the month of June. Cyclists sign up to ride in exchange for support donations to go towards the Children's Cancer Research Fund. In 2019, the Challenge has 80,000 riders who have clocked in more than two million miles.

Mr. Fair, an electrical engineer at Jefferson Laboratory (Newport News), was inspired to join the cause after reading an article about what it is like for children who are diagnosed with cancer to go through radiation and chemotherapy treatments. While his only tie to pediatric cancer is to a coworker whose child was diagnosed with a pediatric cancer and is now doing well, he wanted to somehow do what he could to help the medical profession receive the funding they need to continue to seek the cause of the diseases and hopefully one day cure it. This will be his second year participating in the fundraiser.

The father of two rides on behalf of Team Nathalia, named after a bright and spirited girl from Duluth, who has been battling osteosarcoma (bone cancer). After undergoing many painful treatments and procedures, Nathalia's family opted for a clinical trial that, at first, seemed to help. But a scan last fall showed that cancer had returned, spreading to her spine and lungs. She was recently moved from the hospital back to her home, where she receives hospice care.

To donate to support Mr. Fair's fundraising efforts and to learn more about the Great Cycle Challenge, visit: https://greatcyclechallenge.com/Riders/RubenFair.



York County and Poquoson Weekly Sports Report Season Finale

Submitted by John Hamilton

The Tabb High School boys baseball team saw their dream of winning the State Championship evaporate on Friday, June 14th in far-off Salem, Virginia. The Flag Day battle at Kiwanis Field was a bit unusual for a title game, as 26 runs were scored in a 16-10 slugfest. The proud Orange, Black, and White of the Tabb Tigers lost to the Flying Flucos of Fluvanna High School. Chris Daughtry of American Idol fame attended that school. Tabb had previously defeated Brookville in a 4-3 squeaker on Wednesday in one of the semifinals.

The loss was even more bittersweet because the six seniors on the team had to miss their graduation that very same day. Instead of joining their fellow classmates for a 3:30 p.m. ceremony at William & Mary inside Kaplan Arena, they did get to have a small private ceremony minutes before game time.

Tabb was actually down 15-4 in the middle of the fifth inning, but managed to rally and make the game interesting. In the end it wasn't enough, but the team, coached by Dale Marn, played valiantly until the end.

That concludes the spring season of sports in York County and Poquoson. Have a nice summer!

The six graduating seniors on Tabb High School's varsity baseball team
(Tabb High Athletics Booster Club)

CITY OF POQUOSON
PUBLIC HEARING

The Board of Zoning Appeals of the City of Poquoson will hold a public hearing at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, June 26, 2019 in Council Chambers located at 500 City Hall Avenue to consider the following applications:

1. Exception request by George W. Forrest, applicant, and Julie A. Forrest property owner, for relief from Chesapeake Bay requirements as prescribed in Article XI.IV, Section 11.4-12(a) of the Poquoson Zoning Ordinance for installation of an above ground swimming pool and associated deck on property located at 29 Ridge Road, Tax Map Parcel No. 22(2)4, zoned R-2 (Residential).

2. Exception request by Stephen W. Harris, property owner, for relief from Chesapeake Bay requirements as prescribed in Article XI.IV, Section 11.4-12(a) of the Poquoson Zoning Ordinance for filling and grading of property located at 36 N. Lawson Road, Tax Map Parcel No. 21(1)24, zoned R-2 (Residential).

Specific details of these requests are available for public review in the Community Development Department, 500 City Hall Avenue, Poquoson, Virginia, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Public comments are invited.

Persons who require an accommodation in order to participate in the meeting should contact the Planning Department, 868-3040, at least three (3) days in advance of the meeting.

Karen Holloway
Board of Zoning Appeals

ORDER OF PUBLICATION

Commonwealth of Virginia
VA. CODE § 8.01-316
Case No. JJ019657-01-00, 02-00
JJ019656-01-00, -02-00
York County Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court

Commonwealth of Virginia, *in re*
JOHNSON, AIDEN GABRIEL

JOHNSON, ALISHA RENEE /v.
MCIVER, KEVIN REESE

The object of this suit is to:
DETERMINE CUSTODY/VISITATION OF JAYDEN ISAIAH JOHNSON DOB: 5/19/14 AND AIDEN GABRIEL JOHNSON DOB: 5/19/14

It is ORDERED that KEVIN REESE MCIVER appear at the above-named Court and protect his or her interests on or before 06/28/2019 at 09:05 AM

ORDER OF PUBLICATION

Commonwealth of Virginia VA. CODE § 8.01-316
Case No. JJ019679-01-00, -02-00
JJ19679-01-00, -02-00
York County Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court

Commonwealth of Virginia, in re
NOOR, SHREYA & SNEHA

SHURAVI PARVIN /v.
NAUSHER NURA SOBHAN

The object of this suit is to:
TO DETERMINE CUSTODY/VISITATION OF SNEHA NOOR DOB: 6-14-10 AND SHREYA NOOR DOB: 7-17-05

It is ORDERED that NAUSHER NURA SOBHAN appear at the above-named Court and protect his or her interests on or before 08/16/2019 at 8:30 AM

ORDER OF PUBLICATION

VIRGINIA: IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE COUNTY OF YORK
Case No.: CL19-219

THOMAS DEVONTE BEARD,
Plaintiff
v.
TELLISHA TYQUEENA BEARD
Defendant

The object of this suit, brought by THOMAS DEVONTE BEARD, is a complaint for divorce. It appearing from an affidavit that the Defendant, TELLISHA TYQUEENA BEARD, cannot be found, and that due diligence has been used without effect to ascertain the location of the Defendant; it is hereby ORDERED that the Defendant appear before the Court on or before July 15, 2019 at 9:00 AM to protect her interest herein;

It is further ORDERED that the above paragraphs be published once a week for four successive weeks in The Yorktown Crier, a newspaper of general circulation in Yorktown, Virginia. The Clerk of this Court shall post this Order at the front door of This Courthouse, and shall mail a copy of this Order to the Respondent at the mailing address, if any, given in the affidavit of the Plaintiff filed herein. The invoice for the publication shall be send to Cravens and Noll, P.C., at 9011 Arboretum Parkway, Suite 200, Richmond, VA 23236